THE DVTY AND COMFORT OF SVFFERING SVBIECTS.

Represented by PETER TALBOT in a letter to the Roman-Catholiks of Ireland, *particulary those of the City and Diocese of DVBLIN.*

Deatly Beloued, in Christ.

I Should be very sorry there were any iust reason to beleeue that since my departure from that Kingdom any endeauors haue bin used to instruct you otherwise than I haue don, as to the inviolable Duty and Obedience you ow to His Maiesty's Gouernment, and the Laws you liue under. And, though your former unanimous and humble acquiescence to my constant Doctrin in this particular will not permit mee to haue the least doubt of your loyalty and peaceable behauiour, yet, because Aduersity is a strong Temptation, and temporall necessities the most forcible of all motiues to our corrupt nature, I thought fit to arm your soul against all such assaults, by summing up in this Epistle the substance of what I haue so often inculcated unto you by word of mouth in my Exhortations.

I hope you remember that I alwayes endeauor'd to print this Great Truth liuely in your Minds, that the Happines of Man in this present state consists more in possessing the riches of a good Conscienee than the conveniencies of this world: *Good* and *Bad Fortune* (as they call them) are but improper Nick-names and foolish Notions, if by that language bee meant Riches and temporall Prosperity. Tis the depraued condition of human nature which makes us affectionately couet and unresignedly resent the loss of such paltry trash; whose very Nature tells us' tis

of too baſe an alloy and of too mean and low a pitch of worth for a ſoul ſprung from Heauen and wing'd by Chriſtianity to fly at. The apprehenſions wee frame of our greateſt and moſt important concerns of *Eternity*, and of the proper Means for it's attainment, are ſo dim, for want of rendering our Faith liuely by attentiue conſideration, that wee are apt to miſcall that *Perſecution* which is indeed a ſweet *Prouidence* of our Heauenly Father; and to imagin that Pouerty and other Marks of Predeſtination are ſo many Misfortunes which make us miſerable: Neuer conſidering from how good a hand they com, or indeauoring by Patience to make that excellent uſe of them for which they were intended, to wit the Salvation of our Souls.

To confirm you there fore in theſe Truths, and to ſettle you ſteadily in the ſubmiſſion you owe to the Laws of the Land, as well as in the Charity you are by Chriſts ſweet law obliged to bear towards your Proteſtant Neighbours and fellow-ſubiects, I will ſtate your caſe worſe than really it is, and ſuppoſe you were all driuen to that utmoſt and worſt extremity of begging your bread: I ſay, though you were reduc'd euen to that ſtaruing condition, yet ought you not endeauour to better it by plotting or conſpiring againſt His M.ty's Gouernment, Perſon or Subiects; or by diſturbing the peace of the Kingdom. You ought not, I ſay once more, do this and the reaſon why you ought not, is as euident as it is that you ought not to *ſin*; to deny which Truth is to deny, not ſome one point or ſome few ſingle truths, as do Hereticks, but the whole intire Doctrin of Chriſtianity, and the Common Light of Reaſon to boot. Read the Holy Scriptures, and you will find *S. Paul* tells us that Chriſtians are bound *in conſcience* to obey their Heathen Emperours; and that, *who euer reſiſteth* them, *reſiſteth the ordinance of God*; alſo, that by ſo doing *they purchaſſe to themſelues Damnation*? Does not *Chriſt* himſelf command us to *pay Tribute unto Ceſar*, the badge and token of our Temporall vaſſallage and Obedience? Does not *S. Peter* bid us be *ſubiect to the King as hauing Preeminence*?

Rom. 13.

Matt 22. 21.

Pet. 2.

their attainment of Eternall Happines.

Did Mortalls make ſober and attentiue Reflexions upon the ſurviuency of their Soul, and that the future condition which finally attends it, ſtretches its duration to an endles Eternity, their Reaſon, which Cuſtom and Paſſion hoodwink, would readily diſcouer how iuſt it is to conform them ſelues to Gods holy will in this particular, and euen to take content in their afflictions. For, tell mee, Ibeſeech you, what is this world? Truth makes anſwer for you, and aſſures us all y^t. tis onely â Theatre of foolish and falſe shows: A short Comedy, or rather indeed a short Prologue of euerlaſtiug ſadnes to ſuch as take moſt delight in it. A perpetuall Conflict between life and Death, Sickness and Health, Fear and Hope, Ioy and diſcontent. Again, what is an Inheritance? A parcell of land whereof our Anceſtors were Maſters as long as they liu'd; which term of Life (the onely intereſt any of them could pretend to) is valu'd but at ſeauen years purchaſe: Is it reaſonable then think you, to fix your hearts ſo unremouably and paſſionately upon that earth, as if your Souls were to turn into it aſwell as your Bodies? Poor Souls! After â mans death hee has no expectation of any good for his Temporall Eſtate, being quite out of all circumſtances of enioyiug the leaſt conueniency from it. Nor has any ſeparated Soul the leaſt Concern for any worldly Inheritance, but thoſe vnhappy ones who hauing ouer-loud' it here, feel the fond affection to ſuch â perishable and fleeting Good, racking their wills with a bitter torment for the eternall loſs of it. Nor laſtly, do they concern themſelues ſo highly for the Temporall Proſperity of their Children or Relations. No, no, the blinding veil is then taken from their eyes, and they ſee plainly, nay feel experimentally, that nothing is at all valuable but as it conduces to attain Heauen; and that neither Riches nos Pouerty (but onely virtue) are the proper Means to compaſs that happy End, both of them indifferent and unconcerning, and onely good or bad, as they are wellor ill made uſe of; but yet with this difference, that Riches are by far a more dangerous incitement to

lull our ſouls with the loue of this world, and deturn vs from virtue: Nay euen the *damned* Soules are wiſer than to concern themſelues with wiſhing thoſe Friends whom they retain a naturall affection for, ſuch trifling aduantages. That rich man who ſo much enuyd' the Happines of *Lazarus* in *Abrahams* boſome, was not ſollicitous for his Brethrens worldly Intereſt, but for their inſtruction. which paſſage though it be a Parable, yet tis a moſt ſure proof of the Folly of ſuch as lament the loſs of their Fortunes more than the loſs of Gods Grace, and are more concernd' for acquiring or conſeruing an Inheritance in this world for themſelues or their Relations, than for that of Heauen. what doth it profit a man to gain the whole Vniuerſe if his Soul in the mean time ſuffers any Detriment? And that ſoul ſuffers not onely Detriment but Eternall Damnation, that will attempt to poſſeſs an Eſtate by ſo unlawfull means as Rebellion againſt Superior Powers, and the Laws by them eſtablisht.

I remember one of the greateſt Peers of Ireland (*Wentworth*, late Earl of *Kildare*) deſir'd my opinion concerning the apparition of a Spirit which hanted him not long before his laſt ſickneſs, and the aduice it gaue him. Some circumſtances which were obſerued by his vertuous Lady and others as well as himſelf, made his ſtory very credible to mee: but his aſſuring that the ſpirit neuer recommended to him Repentance of his Sins, or reflexions upon the Vncertainty of this world, or any other thing for the good of his Soul, and that it onely exhorted him to mind Temporall affairs, and to reſtore his Family to its ancient greatnes, made mee ſuſpect (as I told him) it was no good ſpirit that appear'd to him; nay a worſe one than that of *Diues*; for this deſired that ſom would preach to his Brethren againſt the vanities of this world, that did the quite contrary. And, truly, a Spirit that would moue men to reſtore their Friends and Families to the Seats and Splendor of their Anceſtors by violating the Laws of the Land, muſt be of the ſame nature.

Therefore Dearly Beloued, I coniure you earneſtly

(as

(as one who tenders your ſaluation as his own, and beliefues hee muſt render to God an Account for your Souls) to bear with Patience this Croſs which Chriſt has ſhared with you. Faint not vnder ſo light â Burthen; hee carries the heauieſt part: Hee was innocent, you are guilty; Hee ſubmitted himſelf voluntarily, you muſt ſuffer unauoidably. Bee ſpiritually wiſe then, and make a meritorious virtue of this happy neceſſity. Let not the vain hopes of better Times, or the deſire of paſſing a ſhort Moment ſome thing more commodiouſly plunge you in to the intolerable miſeries of Hellfire for all Eternity. Loſe not the ſolid Subſtance of true Happines for an ayery shadow; the fruits of Faith for a groundles Fancy. You haue loſt your reall Eſtates, let not Imaginary ones fool you out of your Duty and the recompence which God has promiſed ſuch as will patiently expect it. Reſiſt manfully againſt thoſe deceitfull temptations, and build not Caſtles in the ayre. I ſay deceitfull; for of all Temptations *Hope*, if not well grounded, is the moſt dangerous: In others, a man runs the hazard of being deceiued by the Deuill and outward appearances; but when hee has once entertain'd Hope, both vngrounded and alſo of falſe Goods, he will moſt certainly be deceiu'd by himſelfe; and the more, by how much hee is in this caſe confident and aſſur'd that hee intended himſelf no preiudice, but an aduantage. Againſt the fair words and promiſes of others wee are armd by the ſuſpicions and cautions wherewith nature and Experience has furniſht us: but againſt that fair proſpect of diſtant Goods within our view, wherewith wee pleaſe and entertain our thoughts, repreſented rather by our fond wishes than by any probability of releef, there is no defence. wiſedom is naturally the ſafeſt Guard againſt ſuch an inbred Enemy lying in a cloſe ambush in our own breaſt; but (alas!) thoſe inordinate affections to worldly things paint them to our deluded Imagination in ſuch gay and liuely colours of Hope, and ſo eaſily attainable, when there is no ſuch thing, that the wholſome Maxims of wiſedom are ſtifled in our paſſion, and Folly (which now has

got the rains) driues the will blindly head long into the dangerous precipice of ouer-late and fruitles Repentance. That therefore which I principally aym at, is, to root out of your hearts this deluſiue Hope, as the chiefeſt obſtacle of our happines in the next world, and of our content in this; which is apt to entice whole nations to their ruin, and laſtly, is the moſt mouing Temptation to make weak Souls break the beſt Orders of the world, and infringe the moſt ſacred Laws of Chriſtianity and Conſcience.

You will ſay that *were it not for Hope, Heart would break:* Nor will I deny that *Chriſtian Hope* is the moſt comfortable cordiall for afflicted ſouls; That *Hope*, I ſay, which is grounded upon Divine Faith of an euerlaſting Inheritance: *Hope* that does ſecure as well as promiſe poſſeſſion: *Hope* that makes us deſpiſe all Temporall Happines, and erecting the Soul to take her flight towards Heauen, makes her at her taking her riſe, ſpurn the ſubiect Earth. Let this Hope replenisht with all ſolid ſatisfactions, bee your comfort, not that empty one of poſſeſſing eſtates already diſpoſed of, whoſe flashing glimpſes has daſeld your eyes, and deluded you for ſo many years. Do but lay it once to heart how great the diſproportion is between a Temporall and an euerlaſting Inheritance, and it will quickly cheer up your Spirits, and wean your wills from that fond propenſion wee are ſtill apt to retain to what was once our own, though wee know it could neuer long continue ſo. The longeſt liuer that euer was ſince the Creation, did not arriue to enioy the world a thouſand years; and, put caſe euery man did ſo, yet it would ſignify little or nothing to ſuch as ſtill long to continue it, becauſe the preſent time, (or to ſpeak more properly, *Inſtant*) fills us but with ſorrow for the time that's paſt, and with perplexity for the future. Thoſe noble Souls who fix their Hopes and Thoughts upon Heauen, do from that height look down unmoud' upon the viciſſitudes of ſublunary affairs, and the ſtorms of ſubiect Fortune; and tis onely thoſe weaker ones that degenerate from the Excellency of their ſpirituall Being, who are shock't with the loſs of a peece of

Land which God knows they had not right allowd' them by the course of nature to enioy aboue a moment: And that too such a moment, that on it E'ternity depends: A moment on whose well or ill' spending is grounded the determination of our finall and euerduring state, either of Salvation or Damnation. Can wee then bee so stupid' as to misspend this precious Moment, and the time which God's mercifull Providence has allotted us to prepare for death, and purchase the Kingdom of Heauen, in sighing and solliciting for a pittifull parcell of earth; and that, because wee hope to pass our dayes as our Ancestors did theirs, in more plenty and folly than now wee can? This argues want of courage aswell as Christianity. *Omne solum forti patria est*, sayes the Roman Orator. If the constant man makes euery Country his own, questionles a Christian ought not bee so set upon any worldly Inheritance as to indanger his sure Title to Heauen and the eternall loss of his Soul for the enioyment of so uncertain a Settlement.

Perhaps some may conceit this doctrin too sublime for the Layty, and more proper for Monks and Hermits than for married men who are bound in Duty and Conscience to prouide for their wiues, Children and Families. Bee not seduced, Dearly Beloued, by such specious mistakes or false suggestions: The Layty is as much obliged to practice Christian Virtues as the Clergy, and married men ought to loue their Neighbours and suffer patiently their own Crosses, aswell as Monks and Hermits. Some Euangelicall Counsells and works of Supererogation are peculiar to the Ecclesiasticall state, but God's Commandements are proper to all Christians. I do not pretend that Lay-men are bound to sell their Lands and voluntarily embrace that Pouerty which Religious Orders profess; but I must maintain that they are obliged in conscience to submit to Providence, and to bear patiently the forfeiture of their Possessions, without disturbing the Publik peace or the Priuate Rights of such as enioy them by virtue of de Laws of the Land. They may haue recourse to the Cours of Iudicature and to His Ma^ty's Iustice and Mercy, but not to any other Tribunal upon earth.

Though the ancient Practice of Gods Church bee a sufficient and most conuincing proof of this Truth, yet it were not amiss to confirmit with a reason deduced from the particular auersion which God hath to Rebellion, and Disturbers of Gouernment. Soueraigns are the Images of God, as wee may say, according to his *Prerogatiue*: Nor does their Soul onely naturally resemble him as hee is a Spirit, but their Soueraignty and Office represent him under a Ciuill or Politique notion, as hee is Supreme Lord and Master of his Creatures. As sure as hee is King of the whole Vniuerse, so surely they are his Vice-Roys in their respective districts. And can wee think y^t this Great King will look on those with any other eye than as on Traytors who disobey and rebell against his Vice-Roy? Does not the Order of the world plainly inform us that euery Superiour Power resents the contempt of a Subordinate one, as avilifying his own, which instituted it, and in virtue of which it acts? Or can wee think that God is not more offended when we disregard him under that character and Title, than when wee commit other Sins? Do not wee see that it stands with good reason y^t sublunary Kings pass by some disrespects and indignities which reflect upon them in other regards, without inflicting very seuere punishments on the offenders; But such Transgressions as touch their Supremacy or Power of gouerning, are accounted *Treason*, and punisht with the utmost of all Temporall Ills, Death? And this is the reason why Idolatry is so hainous in the sight of God, becaus it dethrones him who is King of the whole creation, and setts up an vsurper in his place, to receiue that incommunicable honour, which is so iustly and properly his. Applying this then wee shall find that when subiects rebell against their King or his laws, they contemn God, who appointed them his officers to rule his world, according to his Attribute of Supreme Lord and Master; becaus Kings, as such, represent God's Soueraignty, and are in that regard his Images as well as his Anointed; and who so euer contemns the Image, contemns the Prototype; Tis the known Doctrin of those of our Profession that wee ought to ho-

nour the former for the later's ſake; they onely therefore that hold no diſtinction between an *Image* and an Idoll may take an *ombrage* at this doctrin, but the very grain and *genius* of our Religion obliges us to it ſtrongly, and leaues us no power to unrawell that ty of inviolable obedience to our Earthly Soveraigns which is ſo manifoldly interwouen in our very Chriſtianity. The ſumme of all is this, that ſince Diſobedience to our King neceſſarily implies a diſobeying God, 'tis euidently conſequent that wee can haue no more right to rebell againſt him than againſt God himſelf: and that, ſince God has ſo eſſentiall a hatred againſt ſin as not to conſent wee should commit the leaſt veniall one, though by ſo doing wee should conuert and ſaue the whole world, how can it be imagin'd that heewill allow of ſo great a crime as rebellion upon any ſcore, euen of maintaining Religion or converting Souls, much leſs upon that meer Temporall motiue of ſauing or regaining an Eſtate?

And now, Dearly-Beloued, giue mee leaue to exhort you in Chriſt's name, who is the Author and earneſt Recommender of that beſt Soul-ſaving Virtue of Charity, and in God's name as hee is the Soueraign Gouernour and Diſpoſer of the Vvorld, not to look with a maligning and ſpitefull eye upon your Proteſtant Neighbours as Vſurpers of Eſtates, but as placed in Poſſeſſion of them by the King who is God's Vicegerent, and conſequently by God himſelf; as alſo to conſider y^t the Diuine Goodnes doing euer what is beſt for the ſpirituall good of his Creatures, if they make right uſe of it, his holy Intention was by permitting your Temporall loſſes, to lay more effectuall means for the ſalvation both of theirs and your own Souls. Conſider that their Souls are by creation the Images of God aswell as yours; for which reaſon alone, were there no other, you ought to loue and honour them, and pray for their Converſion; which doubtles has been God's deſign in this great Revolution: In doing which you haue God's own word (and who would not take his ſecurity), t'is impoſſible you should bee loſers if you practiſe the doctrin you

profeſs and wee teach. If any of them bee harsh to you, bear it patiently; if charitable, bee thankfull. I know there are many of them pitty your condition, and offer to compound for your claym, notwithſtanding their Poſſeſſion and the Legality of their Title. I know alſo that euery man is apt to conceit himſelf to bee the beſt Iudge of his intereſt; but giue mee leaue, who ought to haue no other but the good of your Souls, and am equally concern'd for the Saluation of all, to wish with all my heart you did agree and liue together in true Chriſtian Brotherly Charity, leſt your Diſſenſion cauſe your damnation; as it muſt ineuitably if it arriue to that height as to break that moſt excellent virtue, without which all others are dead, (as wanting that which onely giues life to all the reſt) and bear no fruit of merit towards the attainment of Heauen. Vvhat a happy man should I eſteem my ſelf if by my prayers and endeauours I could contribute any thing to ſo pious a work, and ſo proper for one of my calling? what pains and dangers would I not undergo? How willingly would I leaue the contentmens and conueniencies I at preſent enioy in the beſt Climate and Country of Chriſtendom, to liue in that leſs-happy ſoil, not ſo favorable to men of my profeſſion? I shall not value any inconveniencies if you giue mee the leaſt encouragement by receiuing cheerfully and heartily my aduice in this preſent matter, which concerns ſo neerly the good of your Souls and the peace of that Kingdome. I flatter my ſelf, and I hope, not vainly, with expecting your ready inclinations for ſo neceſſary à reſolution, and ſo becoming perſons of your principles: and therefore reſting in this confidence I will make no farther delay, but prepare my ſelf (as I hope I haue you by this letter) for ſo Chriſtian and meritorious a work. Notwithſtanding this only is my deſign, I fear, that if in order therunto I should once more implore and obtain with my Lord Lieutenants allowance a Iuſtice of the peace his warrant for ſecuring a notorius malefactor (though a Friar by profeſſion) falſely pretending papal priuileges, of not being queſtioned for his adulteries, rapes,

ſedition, exacting moneys by counterfeit Bulls as the ſuppoſed Vicar Apoſtolicks Collector, and his Keeping a Community of vicious vagabonds, upon poor peoples charges, under the name and pretext of Religious Nouices, I fear, I ſay, if I should in a legal way indeuor to haue ſuch ſcandals and ſeditions punished by the Kings authority, it will be repreſented again to the Parliament of England as an exerciſe of foreign iuriſdiction, and be made the ground of an other perſecution.

Howeuer I coniure you moſt earneſtly, that if any should endeauour to teach you any doctrin contrary to this which I giue here under my hand, and am ready to ſeal with my blood, you will look upon them as Vvolues, whatſoeuer their profeſſion or habit ſeem to be. You haue had experience of ſom Preachers who pretend great zeal to God and the Kings ſeruice, and yet, at the ſame time Rebellion, and Murthers were proou'd againſt them. Theſe are the men you muſt not giue ear to, nor conuerſe with, leſt you bee infected with their Doctrin and peruerted by their Example. Hear and follow the Paſtors who are anſwerable to God for your ſouls, not mercenary hirelings to whom the care of them does not properly belong. And yet if either theſe, or I, or an Angell from Heauen should go about to perſuade you that it is lawfull to moleſt your Proteſtant neighbors, or defraud them of their goods, or enter upon their poſſeſſions by any means or method which the Law of the Land doth not allow, giue them no credit, but let them bee to you as an *Anathema*. God of his mercy grant you light to ſee, ſtrength to bear, and a truly wiſe Chriſtian Prudence to husband and make that excellent aduantage of your ſufferings which God's All-ſeeing Vviſedome ordaind them for. In the *Iargon* of wordly language they are call'd *Misfortunes*; but, beleeue mee they are the ſame meaſures which the ſweetly-contriuing Oeconomy of diuine Prouidence euer took to make his Seruants happy.

Be of good comfort then and reioyce that your names are writ in the Book of Life: nay bleſs' God that you are

thought worthy to imitate Christ's Example, and that you haue the sureſt Marks of Predeſtination, which are worldly Pouerty and Contempt; But to haue their due and full effect of benefiting your Souls, theſe ſufferings muſt be accompany'd with Patience and accepted as fauours from that hand, which alone can redreſs them here, or elſe will ſurely reward them hereafter: but it ſeldom does both. I hope you will be ſo wiſe as to make choyce rather of the laſt; and pray and endeauour that both your ſelues and your poſterity may rather remain in the condition you are reduc't to, than ſeek to better it for the moment of this life by hazarding that euerlaſting Inheritance, the loſs whereof (and of no other) can poſſibly make you unfortunate. The Peace of our Lord IESUS-CHRIST be with you.

PETER TALBOT.

Paris May the 2d
1674.